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REAGAN SAYS CRISIS IN REGION COMPELS AID FOR SALVADOR

HE DENOUNCES NICARAGUA

Cites Situation 'at Doorstep' in Upholding Decision to Send Emergency Arms

By BERNARD GWERTZMAN

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 14 — President Reagan said today that he had ordered \$32 million in emergency arms shipments for El Salvador on Friday night because "we cannot turn our backs on this crisis at our doorstep."

He ordered the aid after Congress adjourned for a 10-day Easter recess without voting on whether to approve the money.

In his first public comments since the furor in Congress in recent days over the Administration's policies toward El Salvador and Nicaragua, Mr. Reagan also leveled some of his sharpest criticism to date at Nicaragua for conducting what he called "covert aggression" against El Salvador and its other neighbors.

Nicaraguan Harbors Mined

Mr. Reagan, in his weekly, paid radio broadcast, did not refer directly to the American covert campaign against Nicaragua, which reportedly included the mining of Nicaraguan harbors by Nicaraguan rebels and Latin American agents under direction of the Central Intelligence Agency.

But he indirectly upheld it by saying that given the Sandinista Government's "record of repression, we should not wonder that the opposition, denied other means of expression, had taken up arms" against the Nicaraguan leaders.

The Senate and the House both passed nonbinding resolutions in recent days calling for an end to such mining. Senior Administration officials asserted on Friday that not only had the mining ended but there were no plans to resume it, in view of the attitude of Congress and many friendly foreign nations.

Hope Voiced for Cooperation

Senior Administration officials said today that they hoped that the end to the mining, and the declared willingness of the Administration to cooperate with Congress, would lead to a calmer mood after the Easter recess, and to an agreement by the House to vote for the measures related to Central America that are viewed as critical by the Administration and have already been approved by the Senate.

"We just had too many Chicken Littles in Congress in the last week, who seemed to become hysterical over covert aid," one official said. "The Congress keeps saying it wants to be involved and have more of a say, but what can you do when they react like that. They have to accept that covert aid is part of the real world."

The Republican-dominated Senate last week approved \$21 million in new funds to support the covert program in Nicaragua, and \$62 million in emergency military and medical equipment for El Salvador.

The Democratic-dominated House, which was much more antagonistic toward the Administration's Central American policies, did not take up either measure before the Easter recess began on Friday. But House Democratic leaders did offer to allow the Administration to reprogram \$32 million in aid funds already approved for other countries for use in El Salvador.

This compromise, drafted by Representative Clarence D. Long, Democrat of Maryland, chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, was initially accepted by the Administration. But it was rejected by Senate Republicans who said the Administration should invoke emergency provisions of the Arms Export Control Act, which allow the President to send a country military supplies that do not have to be paid for for 120 days.

Pentagon Could Absorb Cost

The Senate leaders also advised using the entire \$62 million already approved by the Senate in the emergency package. Under Section 21d of the law, if Congress does not provide funds for the arms during the 120 days, the cost is absorbed by the Defense Department budget.

Given the different views of the Senate and the House, the Administration, on the advice of Secretary of State George P. Shultz, devised its own compromise, officials said today. As a result, the President invoked the emergency provisions of the Arms Export

Control Act, but decided to keep the level of emergency arms and medical supplies for El Salvador to the \$32 million offered by the House, rather than the \$62 million approved by the Senate.

This was done, a senior State Department official said, to demonstrate that the Administration was not trying to flout the intention of Congress, but was trying to be conciliatory toward the House, hoping for a more cooperative relationship after the recess.

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Appreciation Voiced by Long

Mr. Long on Friday afternoon, when he thought the Administration would use all of the \$62 million approved by the House, condemned the rejection of the reprogramming proposal. But he said today that he appreciated Mr. Shultz's setting the level at \$32 million, and that this "should mollify the House somewhat."

There is still a potential for a confrontation, however, because the Administration is still hoping for early action by the House after the recess on the pending \$62 million request for El Salvador. Mr. Long said he did not think the House would want to take up the matter again until after a new Salvadoran President is sworn in on June 15.

Mr. Long said that the \$32 million, which includes \$20 million in ammunition and other military supplies, and \$12 million for helicopters and other equipment for medical evacuation,

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should be more than enough for the Salvadorans through June.

Mr. Reagan, in addition to repeating his concern about Nicaragua's joining with the Soviet Union and Cuba in trying "to install Communism by force throughout this hemisphere," also said that the United States was still backing the effort by the so-called Contadora Group, consisting of Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela and Panama, to achieve a regional peace agreement in Central America. The group takes its name from a Panamanian island where leaders of the four nations first met last year.

"We've maintained a consistent policy toward the Sandinista regime, hoping they can be brought back from the brink peacefully through negotiations," President Reagan said.

"We're working through the Contadora process for a verifiable, multilateral agreement, one that insures the Sandinistas terminate their export of subversion, reduce the size of their military forces, implement their democratic commitments to the Organization of American States and remove Soviet-bloc and Cuban military personnel," he said.

Move in World Court Cited

But, he said, the Sandinistas are trying to avoid an agreement and are instead seeking more sympathetic hearings in world bodies such as the United Nations Security Council, and now the World Court. He did not refer to the United States' announcement

that it would not accept World Court jurisdiction over a Nicaraguan complaint.

In discussing Nicaraguan military forces, Mr. Reagan said that the Sandinista army had grown from about 10,000 to 100,000 in less than five years. He said that last year the Soviet bloc delivered "over a hundred million dollars in military hardware."

"The Sandinistas have established a powerful force of artillery, multiple rocket launchers and tanks in an arsenal that exceeds that of all the other countries in the region put together," he said.

He said that more than 40 "new military bases and support facilities" have been constructed in Nicaragua through Soviet bloc- and Cuban support totalling more than \$300 million.

'Terrorist Violence' Noted

"In addition to money and guns there are now more than 2,500 Cuban and Soviet- military personnel, another 5,000 so-called civilian advisers, as well as P.L.O., East-bloc and Libyan assistance to the Sandinistas," he declared.

He said that Nicaraguan-backed "terrorist violence" has been felt in El Salvador, Costa Rica and Honduras.

"What I've said today is not pleasant to hear," he said, "but it is important that you know that Central America is vital to our interests and to our security."

"We cannot turn our backs on this crisis at our doorstep," he said.